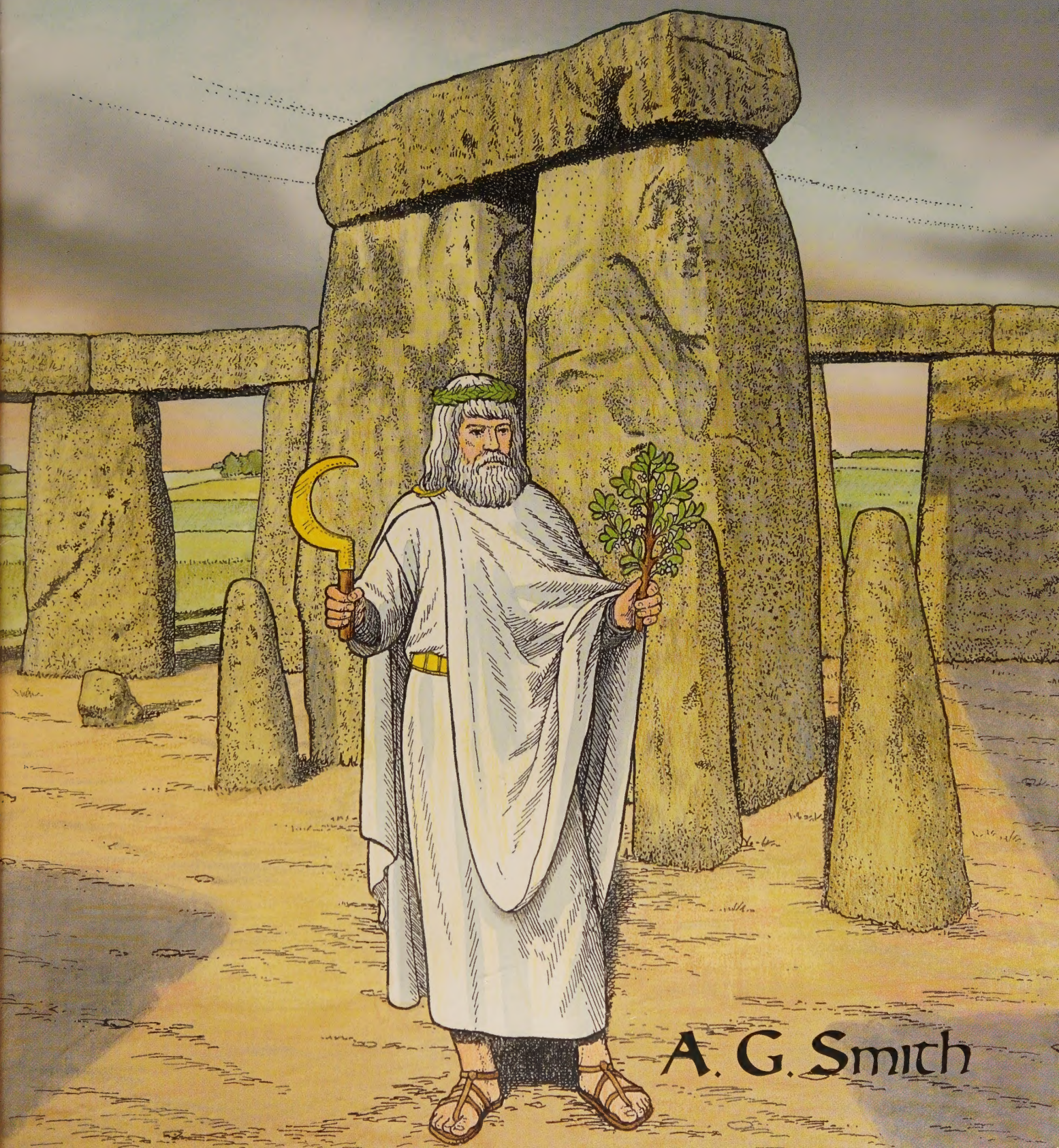


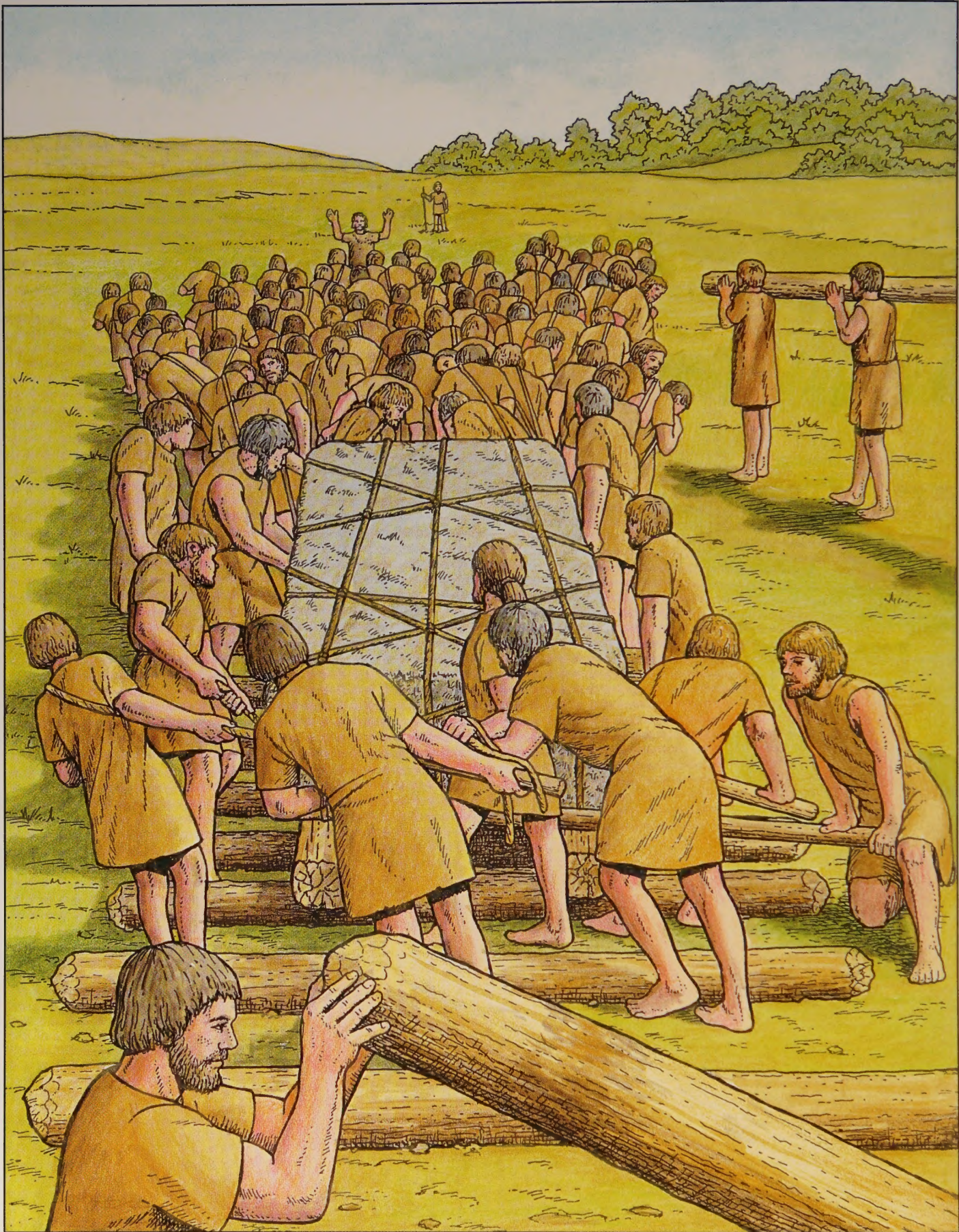
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THE STORY OF STONEHENGE

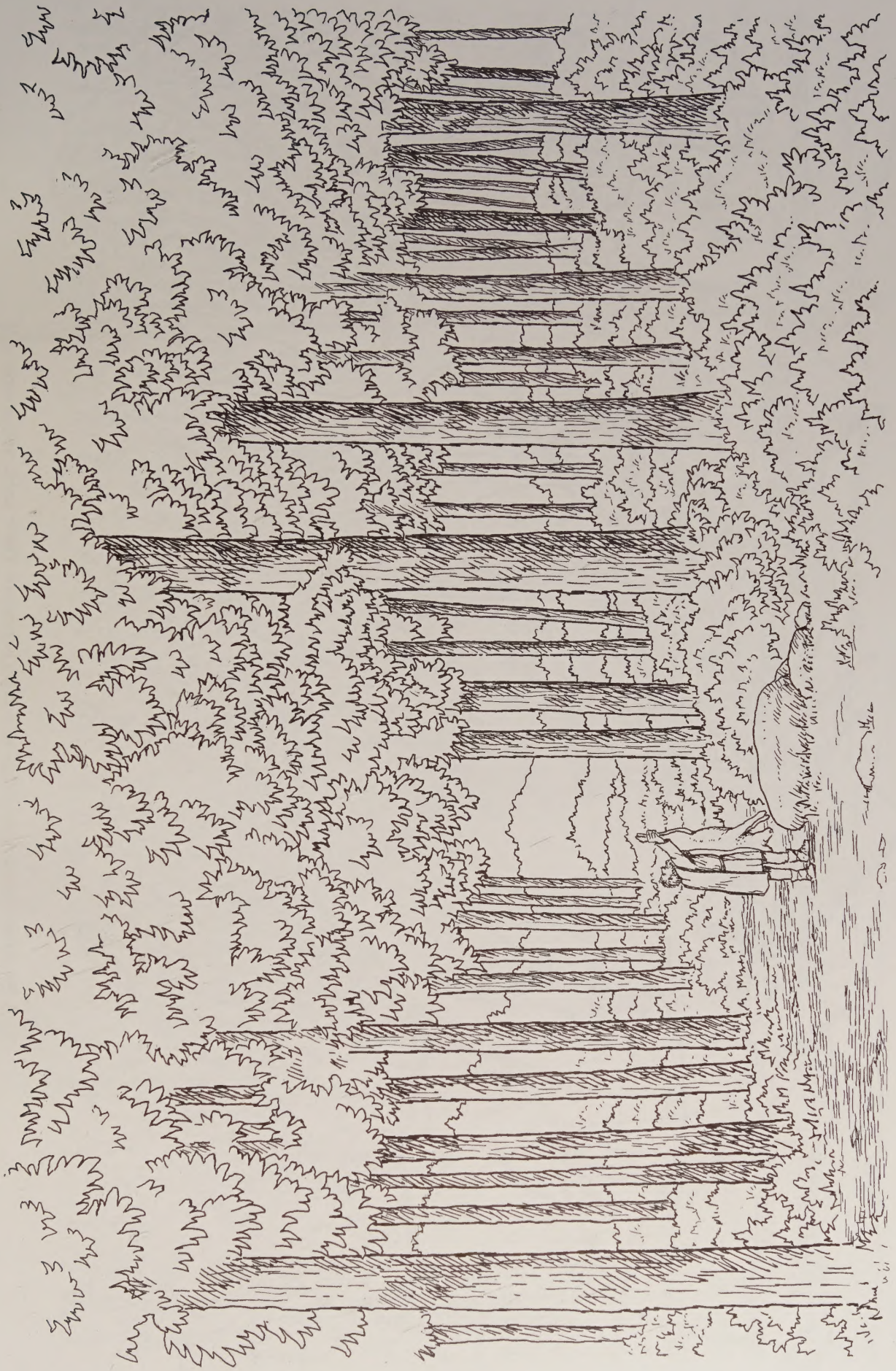
AND OTHER MEGALITHIC SITES



A. G. Smith



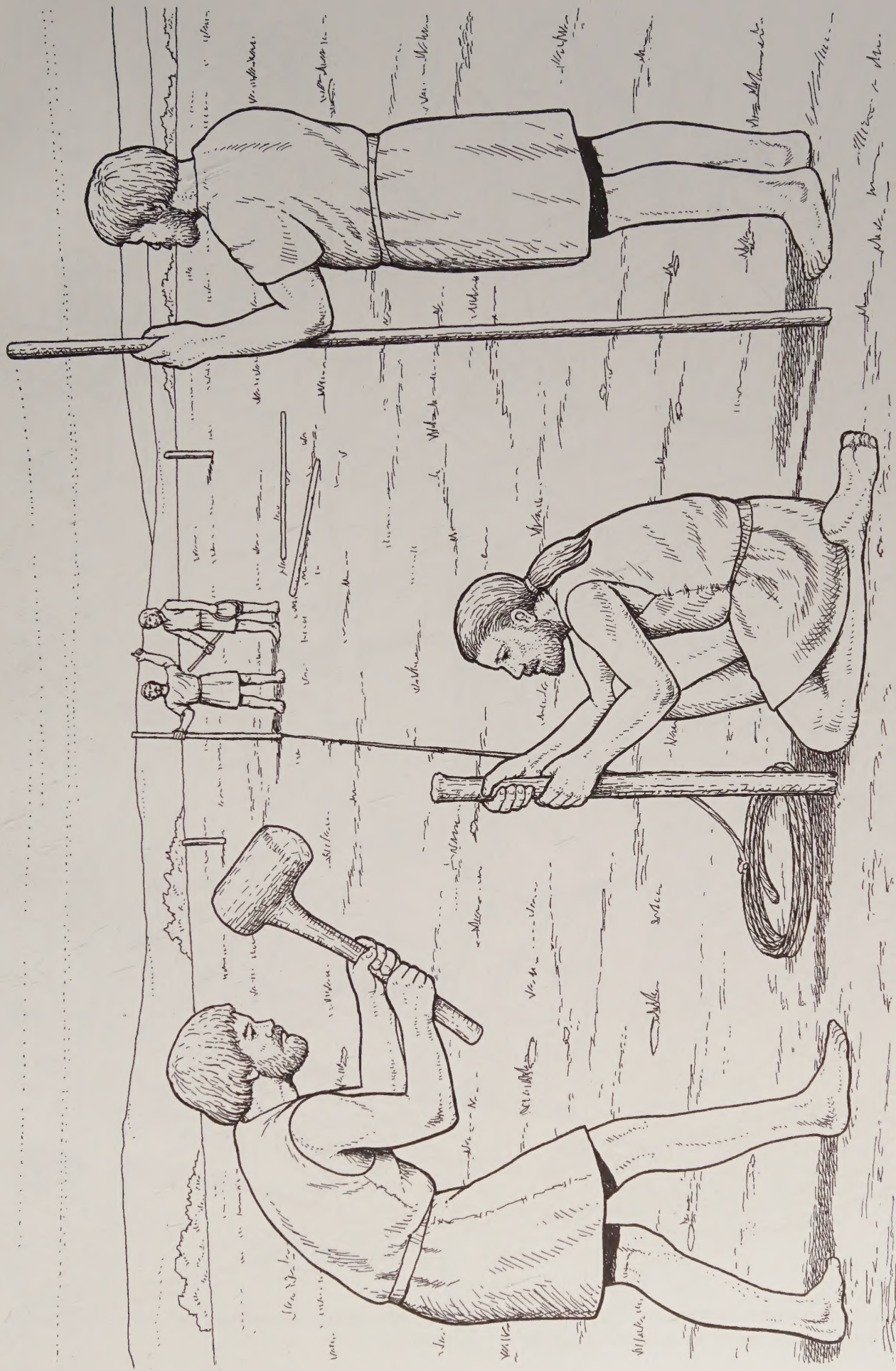
Moving the giant sarsen stones required careful planning and lots of muscle, plate 6.



1. Long before early people built ceremonial structures, such natural settings as wooded groves or rock outcroppings were used for rites and rituals.



2. A Neolithic (Stone Age) village with grain harvesters. These stable and prosperous farmers and herdsman were the people who began building Stonehenge.

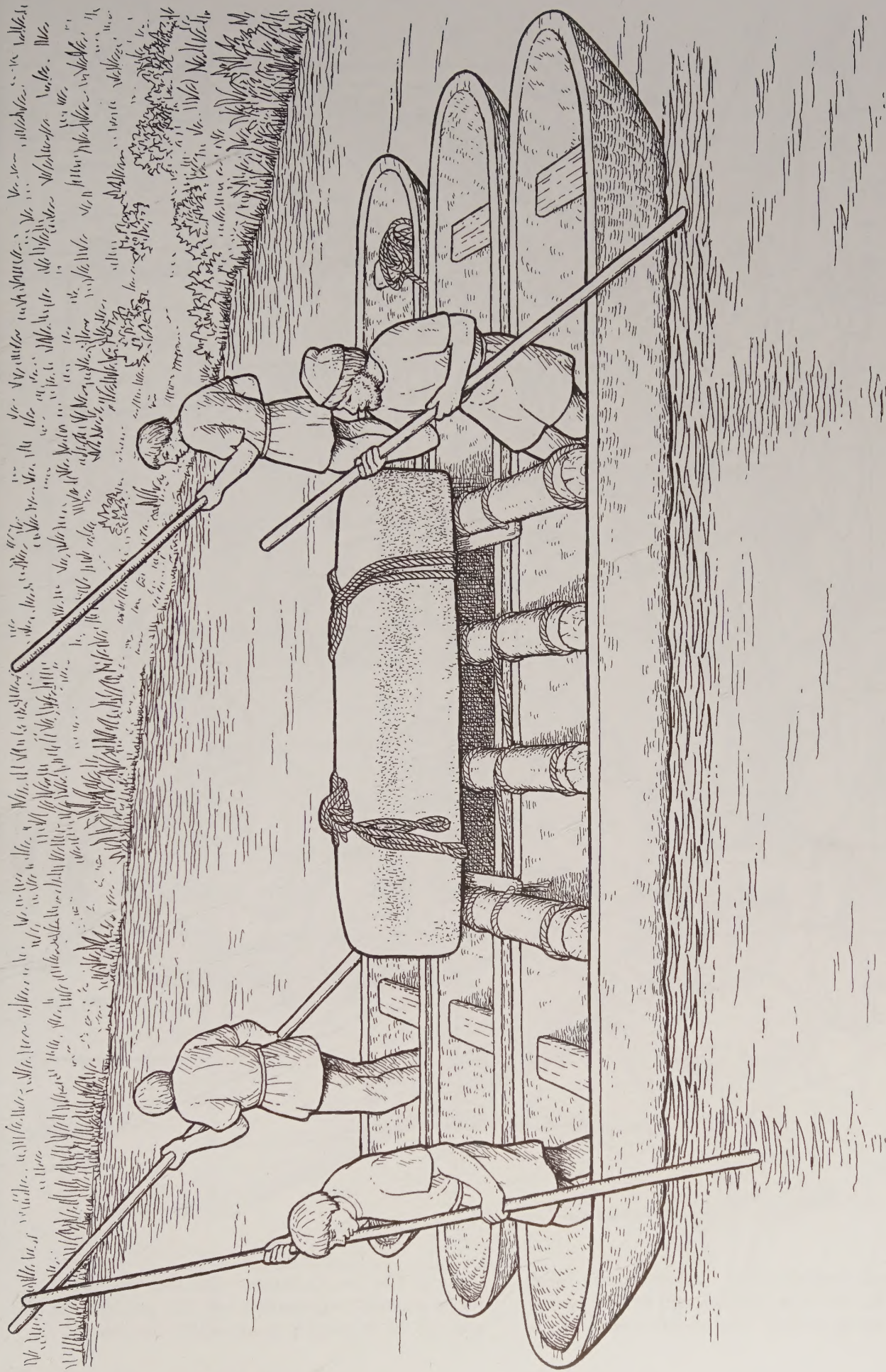


3. The builders used leather ropes and wooden rods to define the perimeter of the site and position the first stones. These initial steps took place about 2900 B.C.



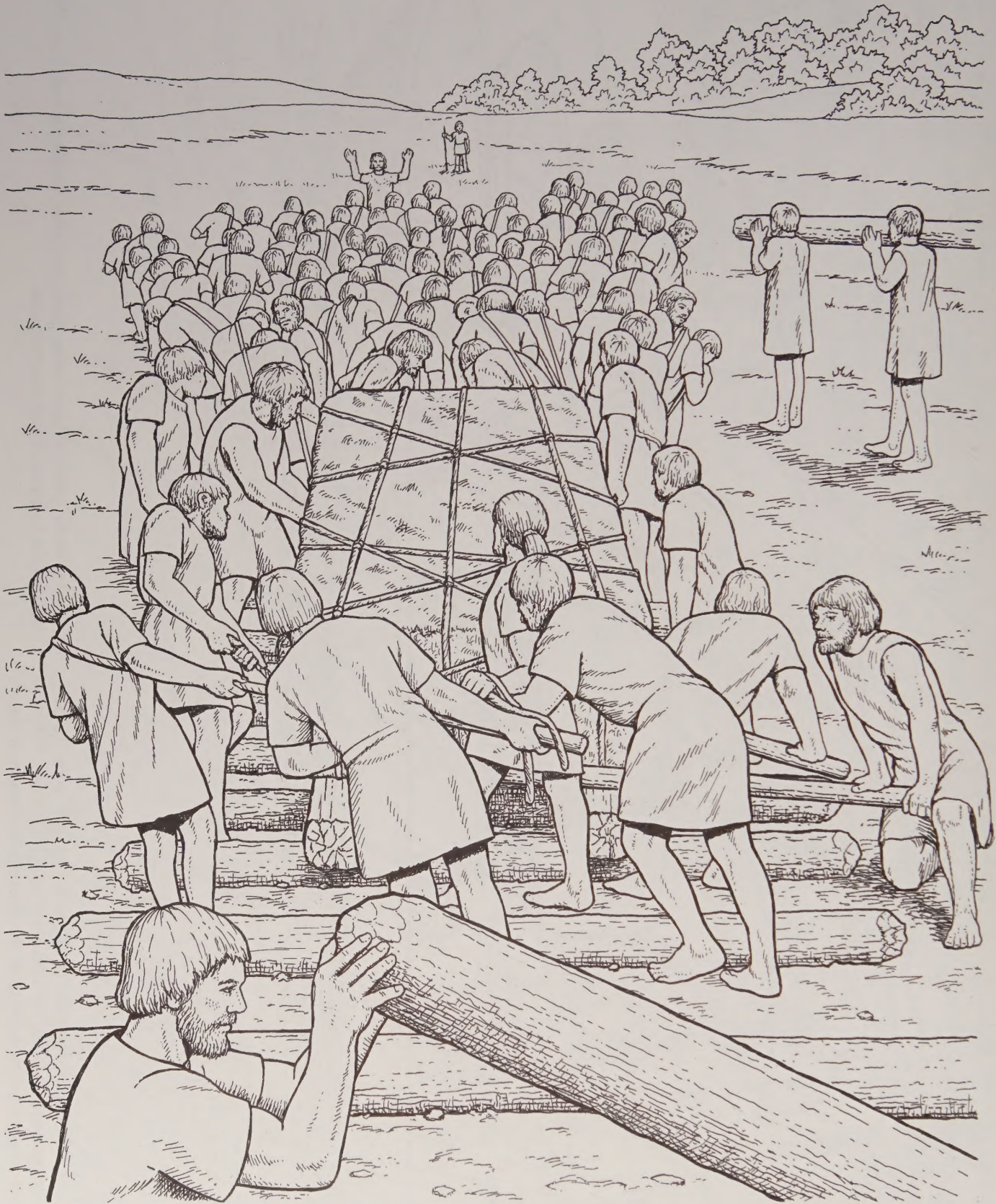
4. Stone Age peoples used tools made from deer antlers, bone, and fire-hardened wood to excavate the large

ditches surrounding Stonehenge and other megalithic monuments.



5. Archaeologists believe the bluestones (a distinctive kind of stone probably thought by the ancient builders to have magical properties) found at Stonehenge were transported by water from the Prescelly Mountains in south-

western Wales, some 240 miles away. Since the stones weighed several tons, this feat required great skill and determination.

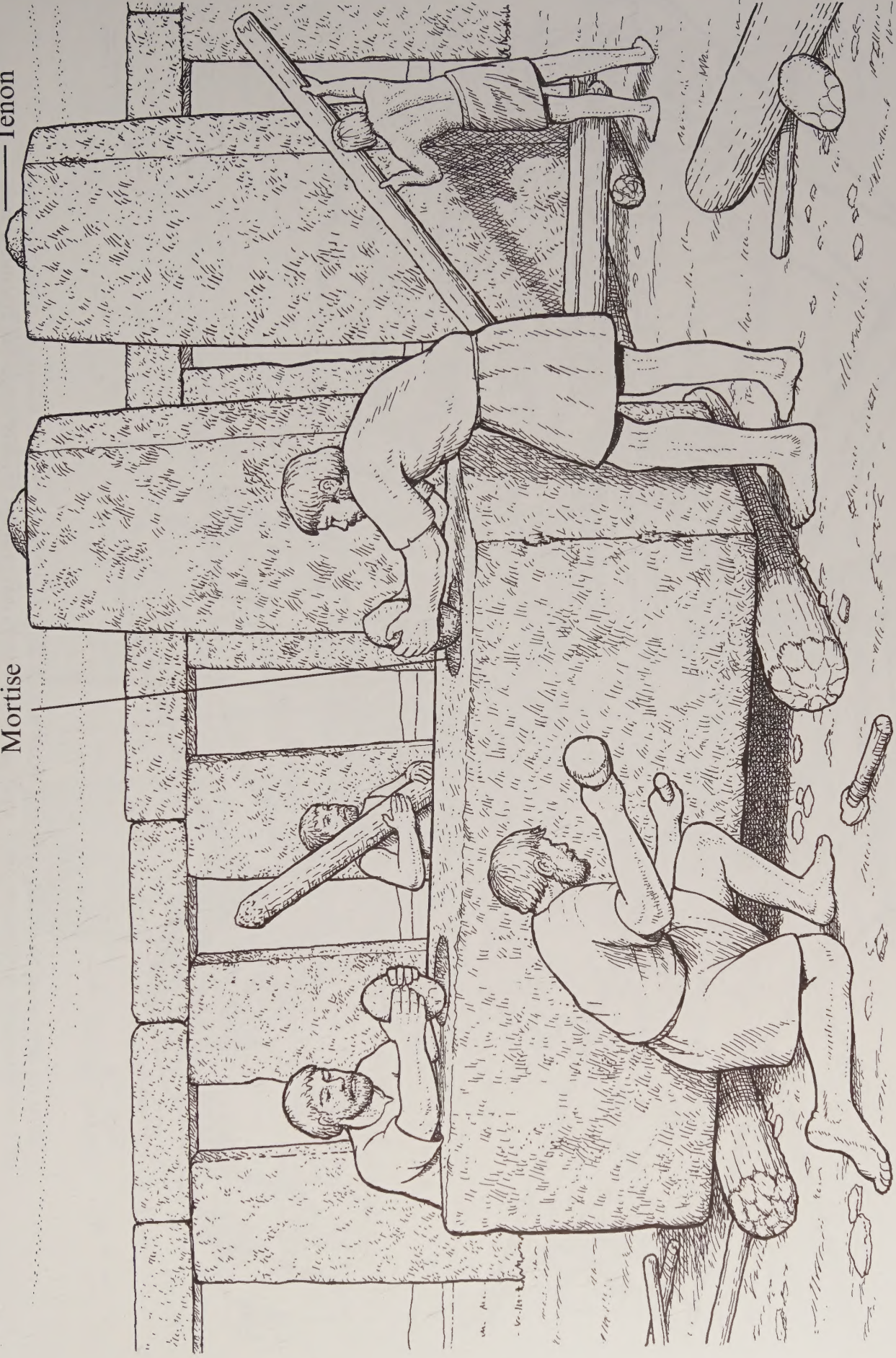


6. Even larger stones, called “sarsen” stones, were dragged to the site from Marlborough Downs, twenty miles to the north. Moving these gigantic stones, weigh-

ing up to fifty tons and more, would have required careful preparation, organisation, and the participation of much of the community to accomplish the task.

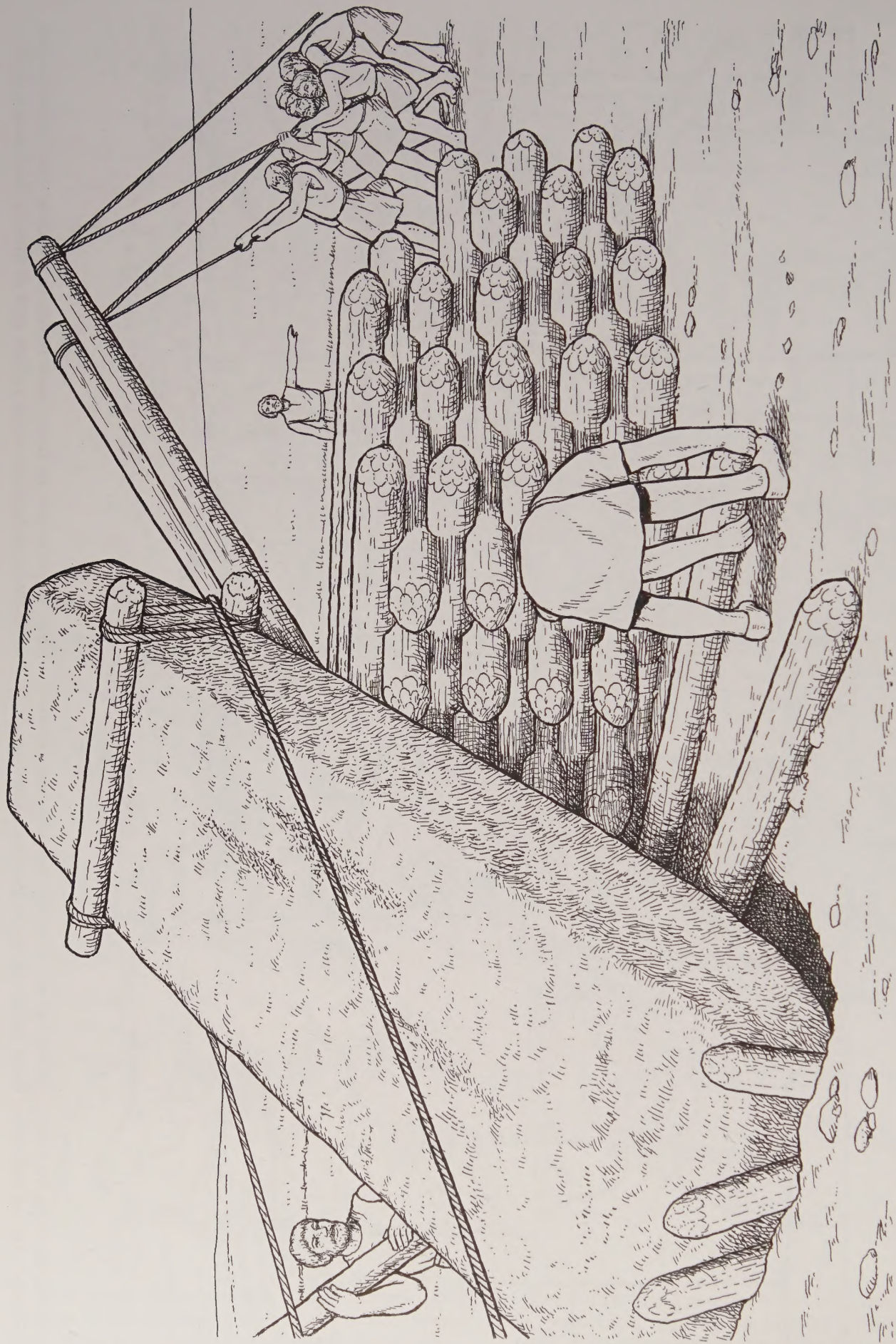
Mortise

Tenon



7. Once the stones were on the Stonehenge site, workmen used stone implements to shape and smooth them. Hard stones served to pulverize softer stones.

Workmen also carved mortise-and-tenon joints (a projecting piece of stone [tenon] that fitted into a hole [mortise] in another piece of stone) to hold them in place.

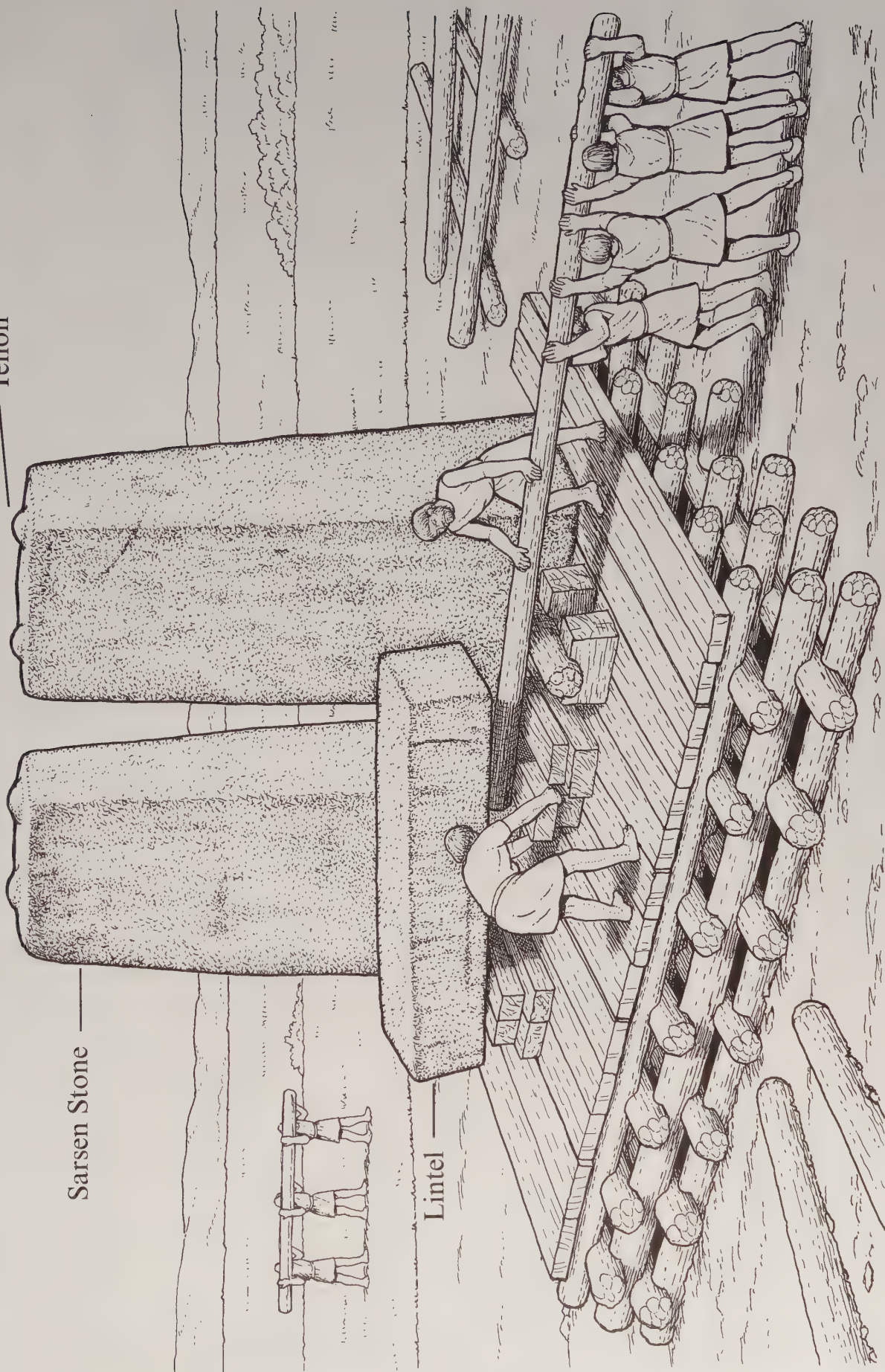


8. After the large sarsen stones were prepared by the masons, holes were dug for the bases. Raising the stones to a vertical position required the ingenious use of ropes and wooden levers, and countless hours of dangerous, exhausting work.

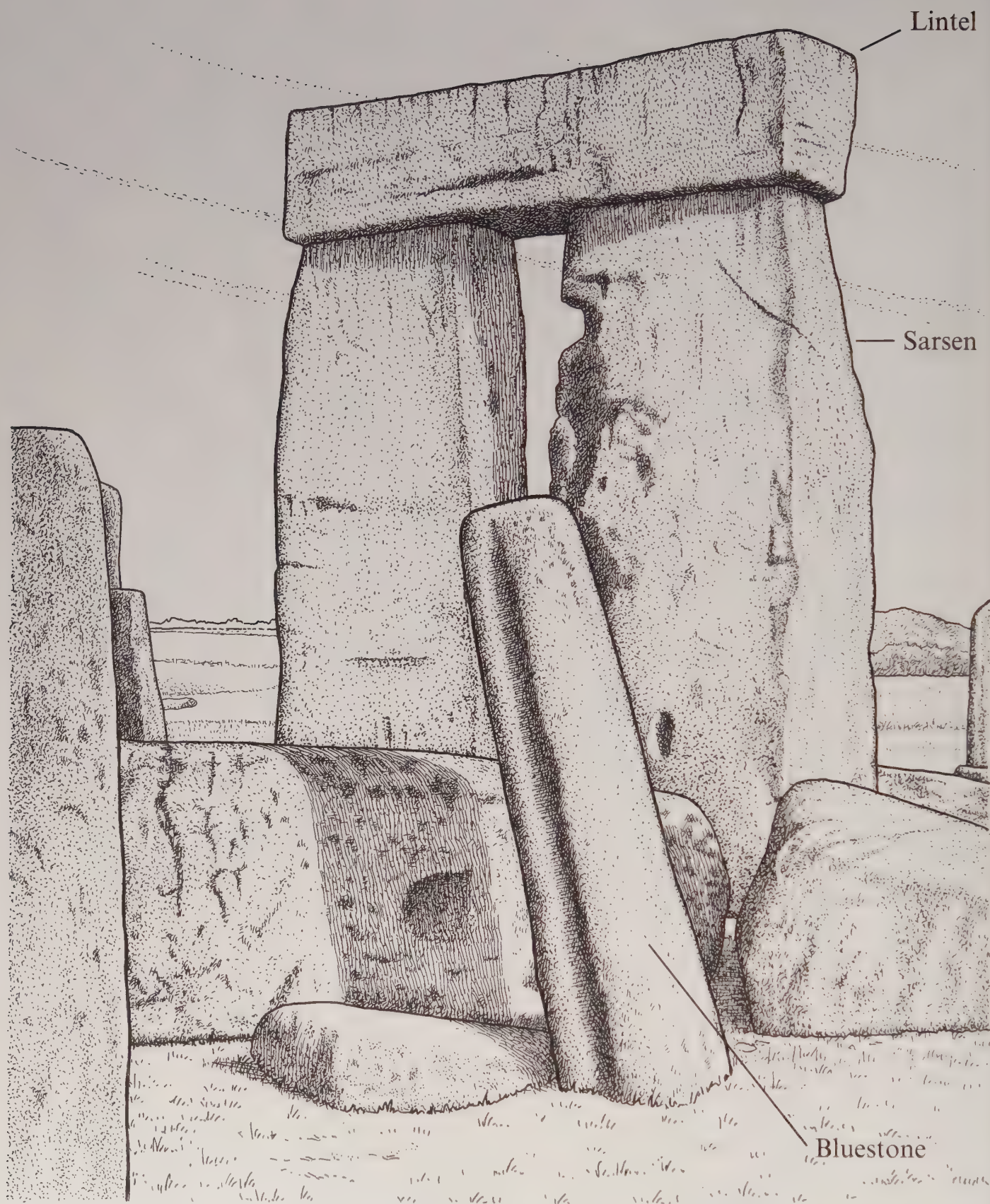
— Tenon

Sarsen Stone —

Lintel —

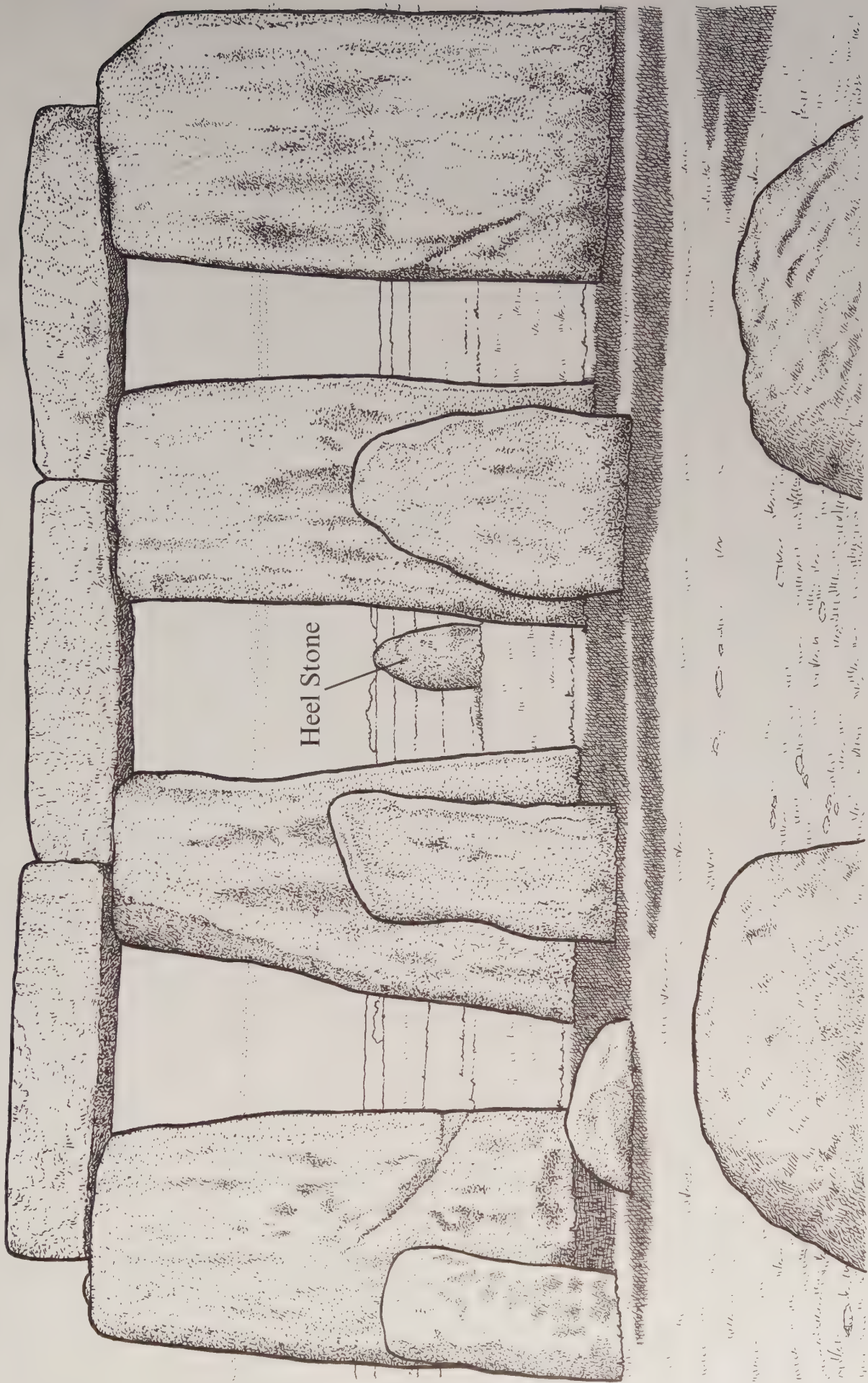


9. In order to place the lintels (horizontal crosspieces) on top of the standing sarsen stones, the builders devised a system of platforms and levers to raise them into position.

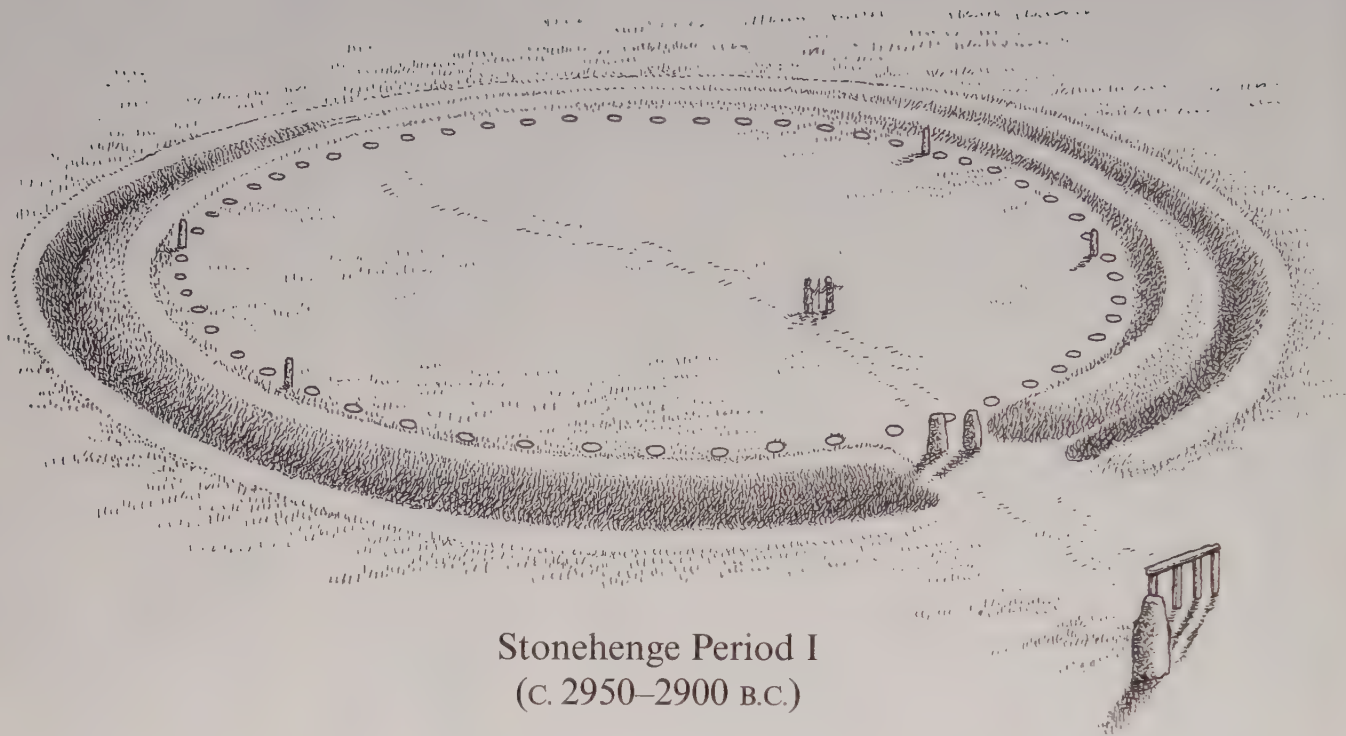


10. Within the enclosure formed by the circle of sarsen stones, the builders also constructed five trilithons—two giant sarsen stones topped by a lintel. These trilithons

were arranged in the form of a horseshoe. Shown here is a trilithon with a grooved bluestone in the foreground.



11. The Heel Stone (a giant sarsen stone sunk into the earth outside the structure) viewed from the Great Trilithon within. In 2000 B.C. the midsummer sun rose directly over the Heel Stone.



Stonehenge Period I
(c. 2950–2900 B.C.)



Stonehenge Period II
(c. 2900–2400 B.C.)

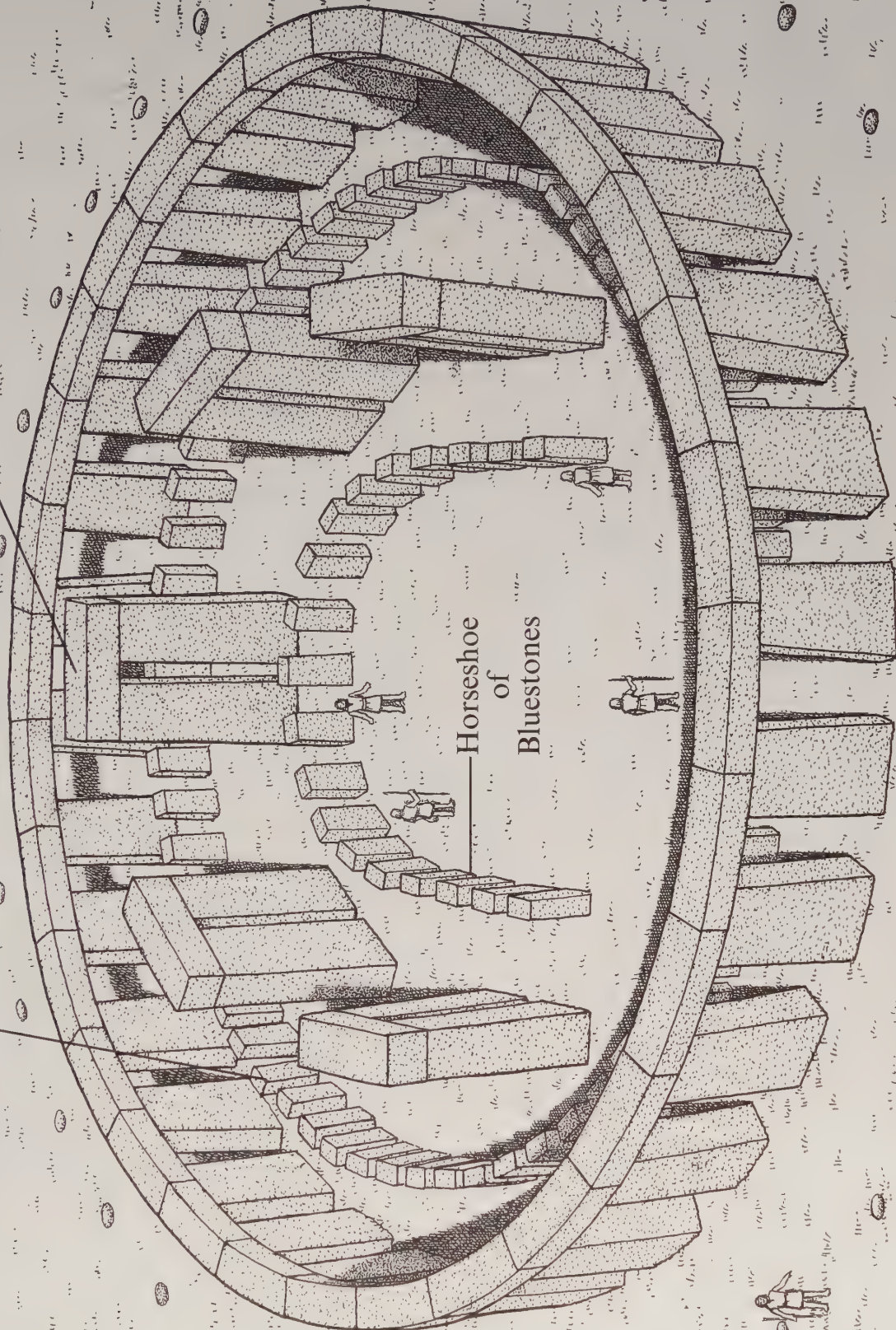
12. Archaeologists believe that Stonehenge was built in three main stages over a period of 1,400 years. During Stonehenge Period I (c. 2950–2900 B.C.), the structure consisted of a circular earthen bank and ditch, with three large stones and four “station stones,” which stood

just inside the bank. Within this enclosure were fifty-six holes that probably once held timber posts. Stonehenge Period II (c. 2900–2400 B.C.) saw the construction of a double circle of bluestones and an “avenue” approaching the entrance to the enclosure.

Circle of
Bluestones

Great Trilithon

Horseshoe
of
Bluestones

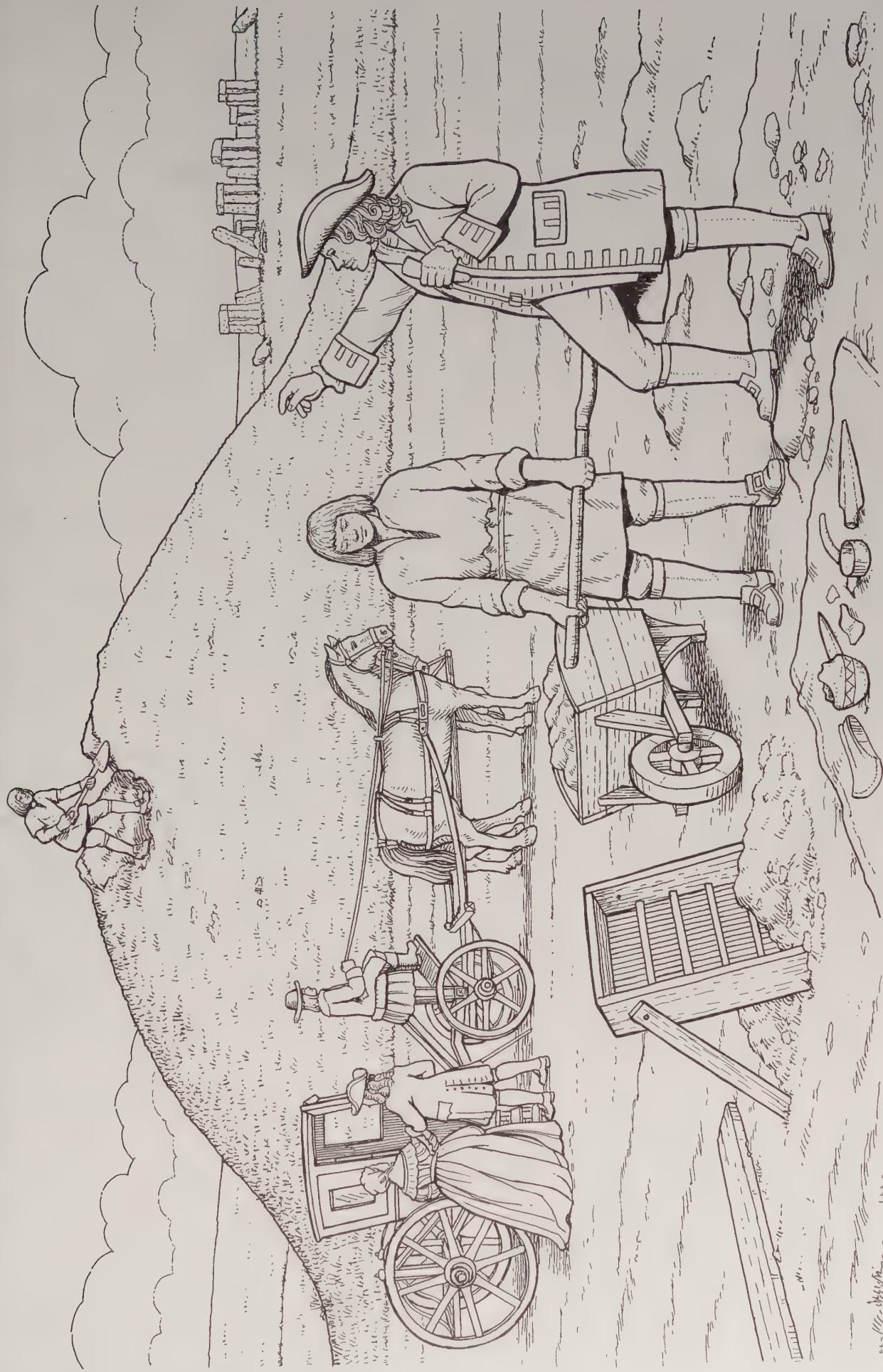


13. Stonehenge Period III. This illustration represents Stonehenge as it is thought to have appeared in its most complete form, about 1500 B.C.



14. When the Romans encountered Stonehenge in the first century A.D., they speculated that it was an ancient British temple. The Roman historian Hecateus believed it

might have been built by the “Hyperboreans” (people inhabiting a cool northern climate) as a temple to Apollo.



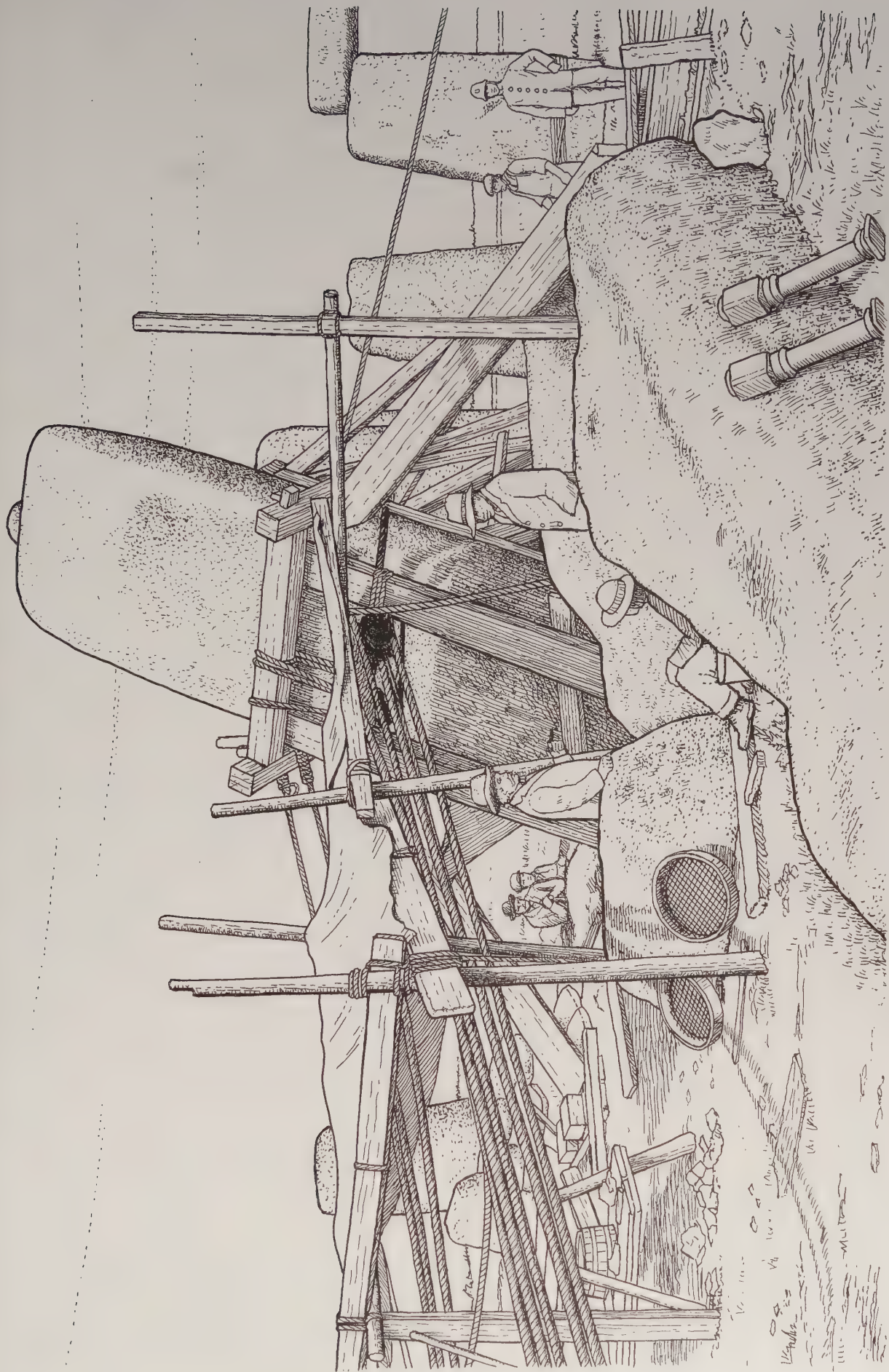
15. In the 1660s, a collector, folklorist, and barrow digger (tomb explorer) named John Aubrey conducted investigations of the ancient

monuments of Britain. It was he who discovered the fifty-six postholes around the circumference of the original Stonehenge structure.

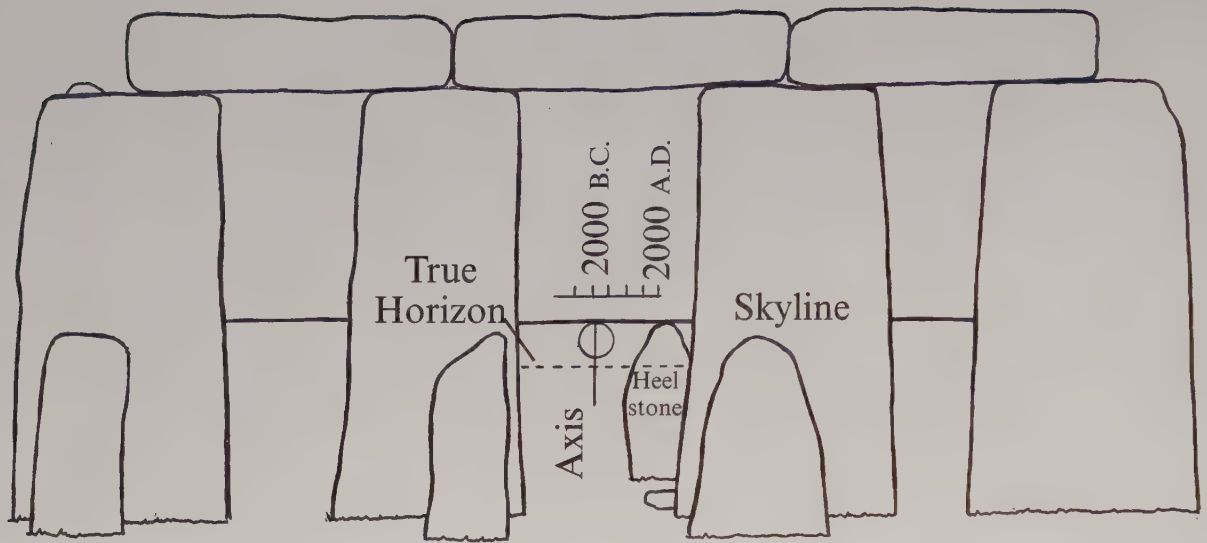


16. John Aubrey also popularized the notion of Stonehenge as a “temple of the Druids,” an ancient Celtic priesthood. Today’s archaeologists have disproved

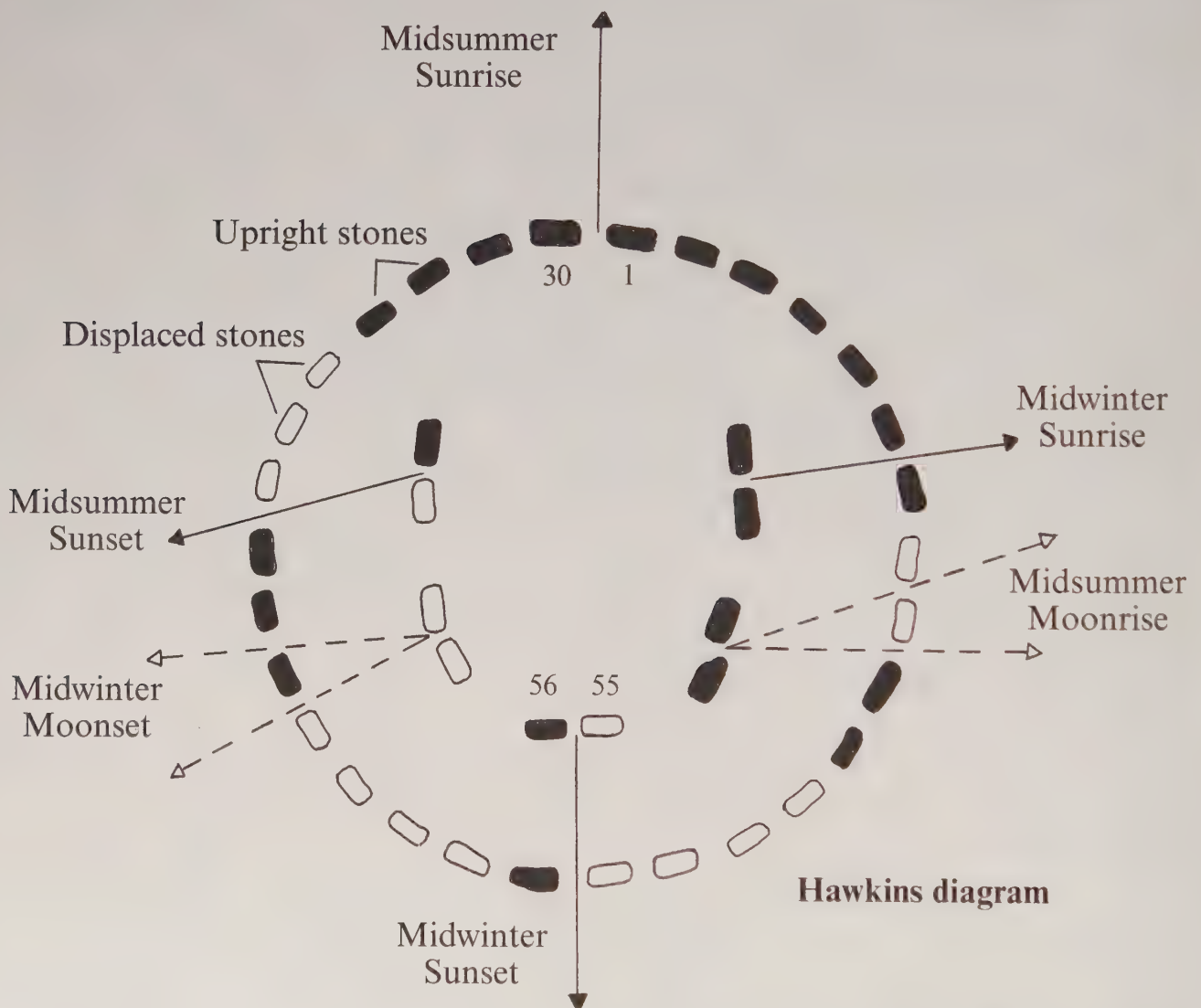
this theory, however, since modern dating methods indicate that Stonehenge was built long before the time of the Druids.



17. In the early twentieth century, archaeologists used pulleys and mechanical jacks to excavate and raise the fallen stones of Stonehenge and other monuments.



Lockyer diagram

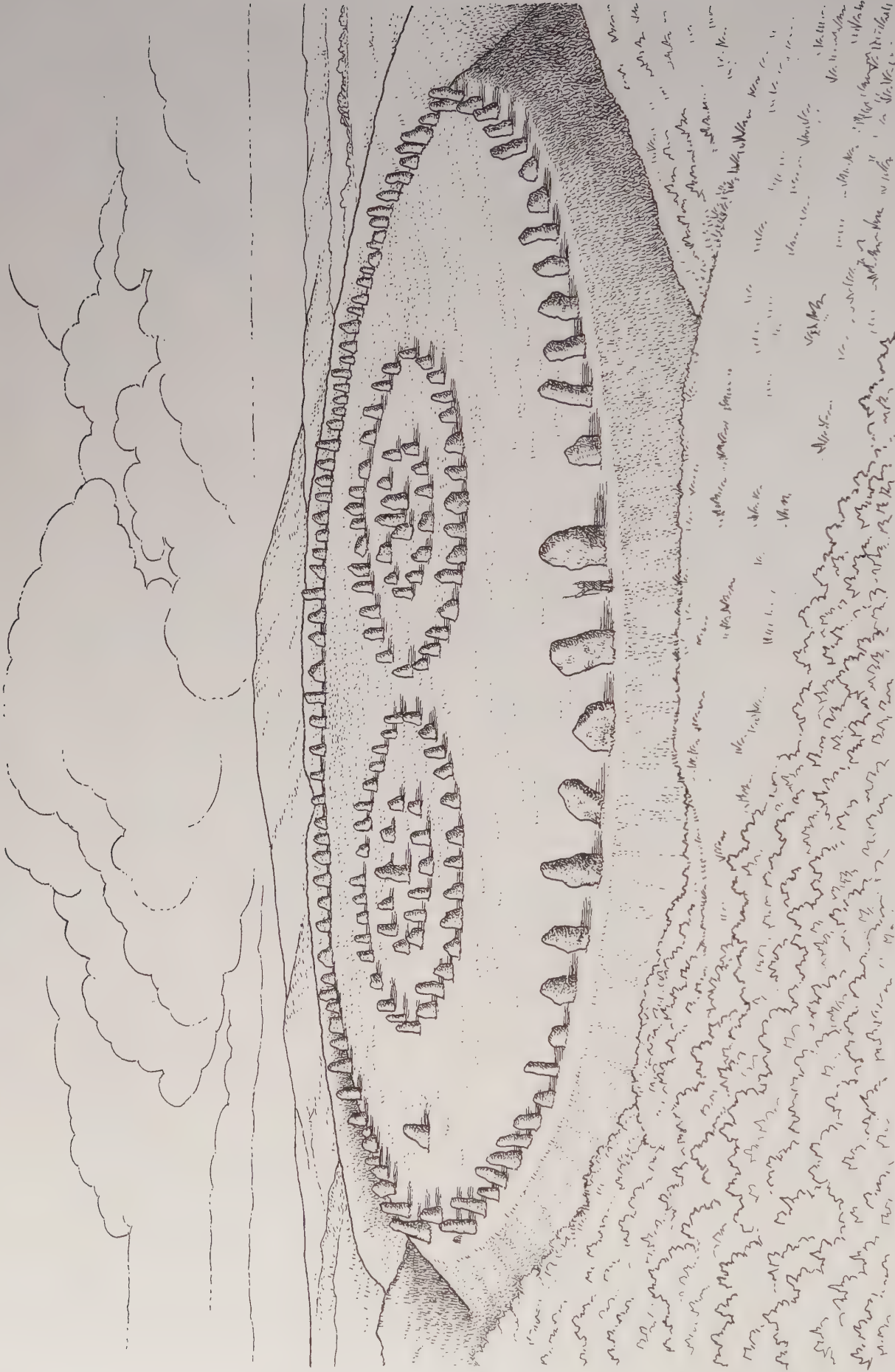


18. Scholars have long sought to explain the meaning of Stonehenge. The upper diagram illustrates observations by Sir Norman Lockyer (1836–1920), a British astronomer who theorized that Stonehenge was aligned so that the midsummer sun arose over the Heel Stone, and that the

monument was used for calendar-based rituals and celebrations. The lower diagram illustrates the theories of Dr. Gerald S. Hawkins (1928–2003), also an astronomer, who thought Stonehenge was a kind of astronomical observatory that could even be used to predict eclipses.

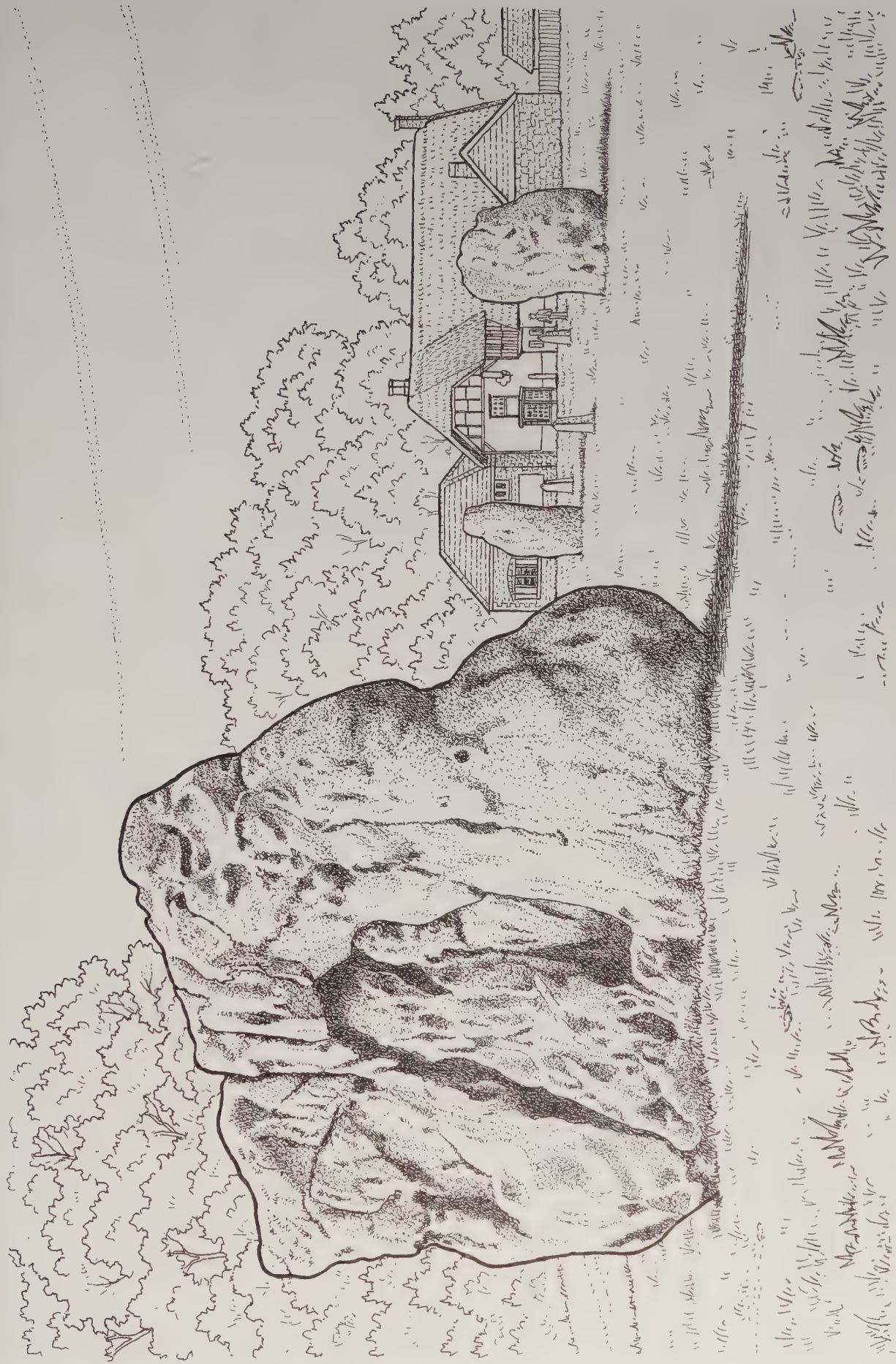


19. Tourist excursions to Stonehenge became popular in the early twentieth century, and the ancient site still attracts many thousands of visitors each year.



20. Other fascinating prehistoric sites in the Stonehenge area include the Neolithic monument of Avebury. This site consisted of a great ditch and embankment surrounding a large circle of stones and two smaller stone circles.

Originally these included over 160 stones, some weighing as much as forty tons. This reconstruction drawing is based on a survey made by Philip Crocker in 1812. The massive ditch was actually crossed by several causeways.



21. Today the modern village of Avebury sits amid the giant standing stones of the ancient monument, believed to have been built by the Beaker people (named for their distinctive pottery) in the late Neolithic period, c. 2000–1600 B.C.



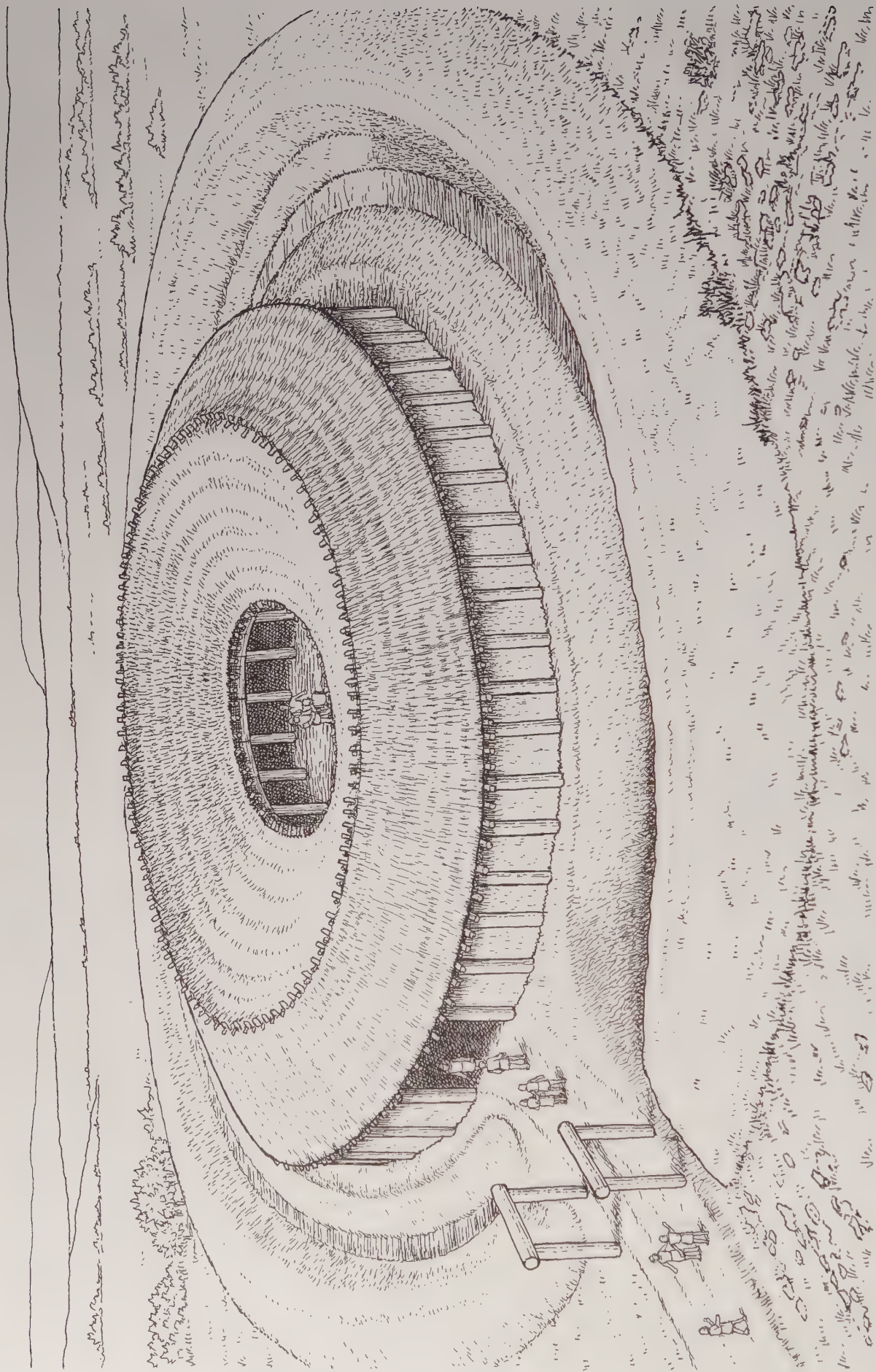
22. The West Kennet long barrow, just south of Avebury, was used as a communal burial place for over 1,000 years. Surprisingly, this great burial mound,

some 330 feet long, contained the remains of only forty-six individuals. Archaeologists think it was permanently closed and abandoned about 1600 B.C.



23. Also south of Avebury is Silbury Hill, a large artificial mound with a flat top. Its purpose is still uncertain. The construction of Silbury Hill was an amazing feat of engineering that involved quarrying and moving over eight

million cubic feet of material. It is estimated to have required the work of 700 people over a period of ten years.

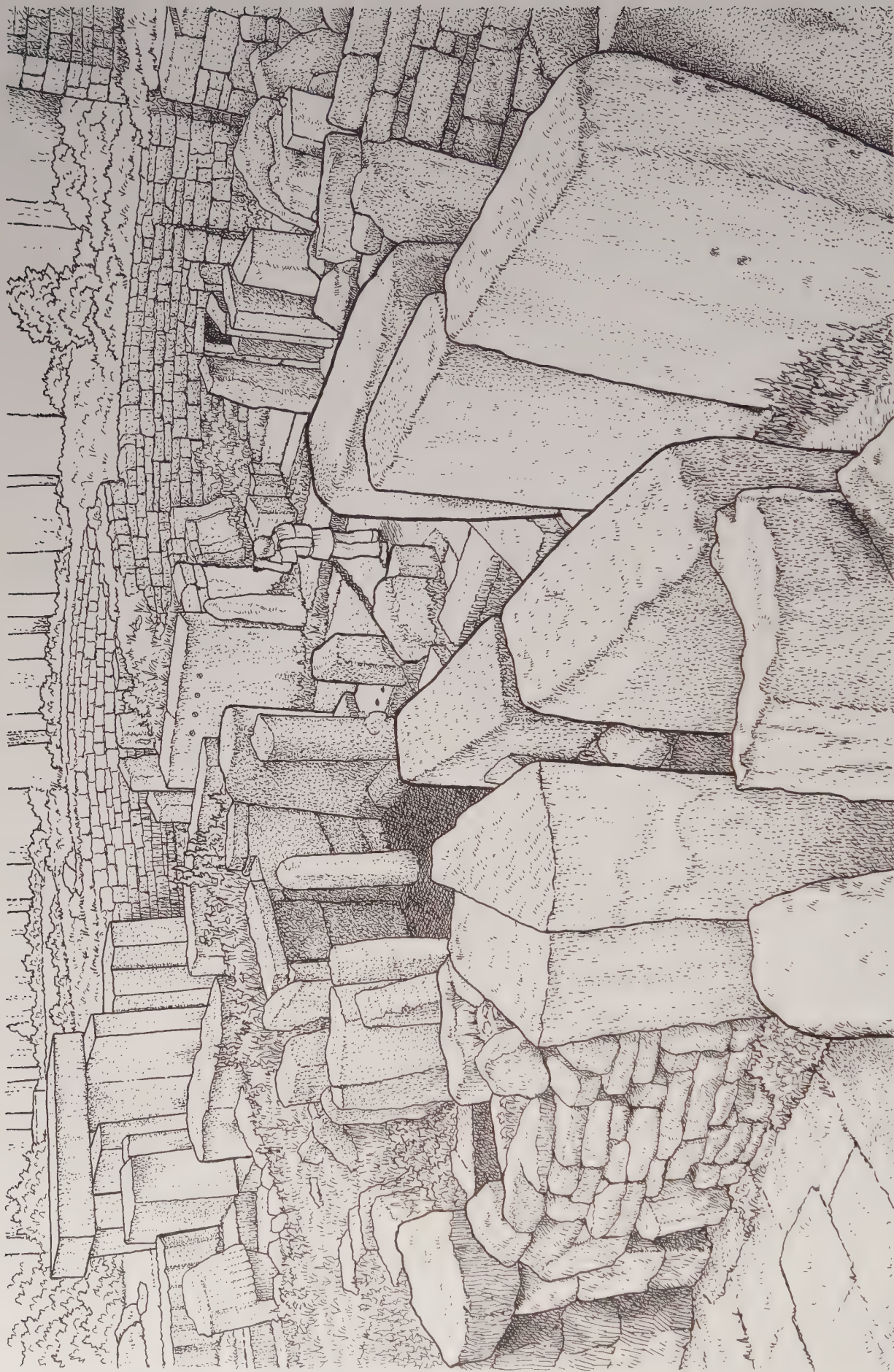


24. The remains of Woodhenge, which lies two miles northeast of Stonehenge, were discovered in 1928. It consists of a large circular bank surrounding six concentric rings of posts. Archaeologists believe the site was once covered by a roof.

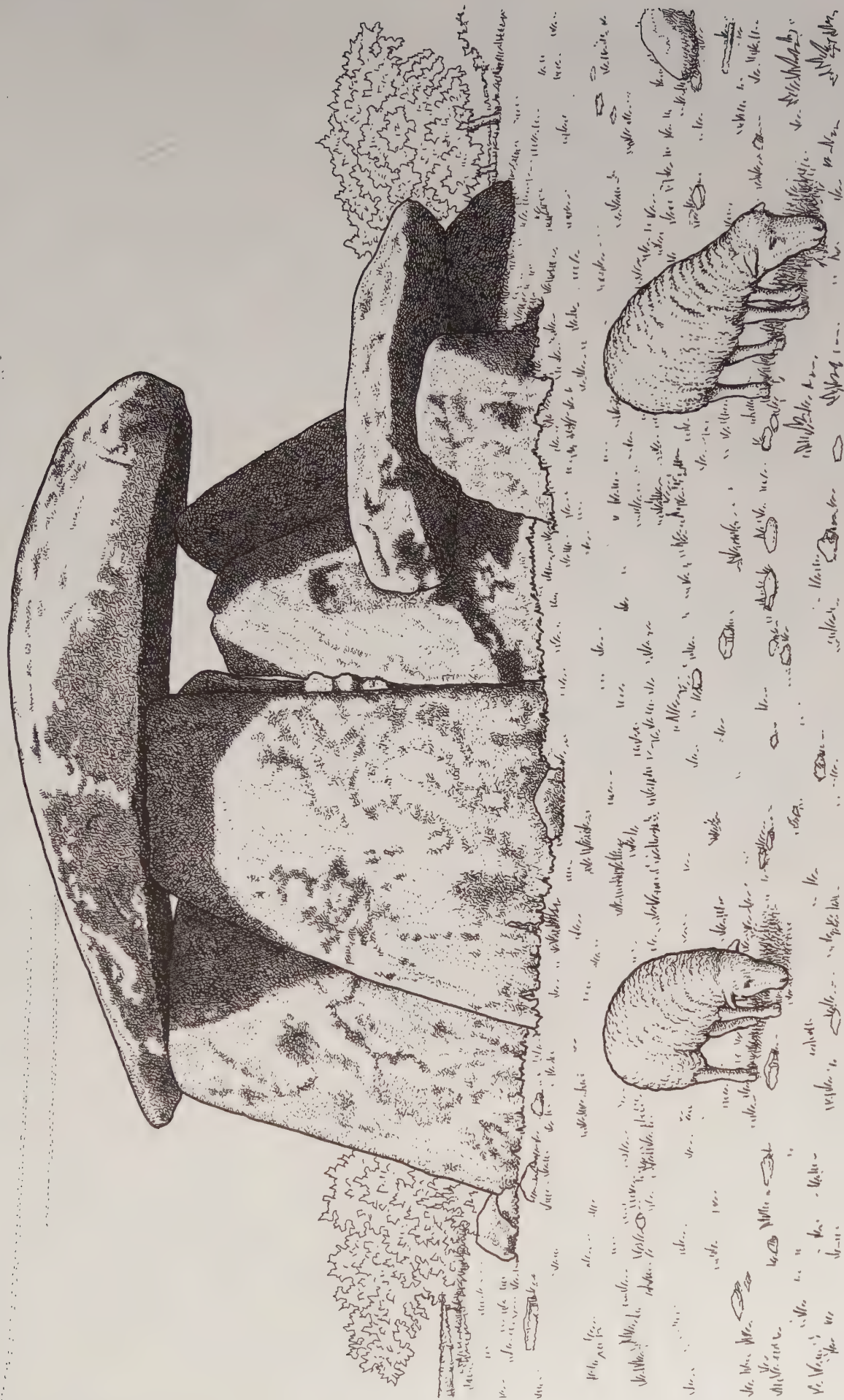


25. Material objects from the neolithic and early Bronze Ages in Britain. In clockwise order from top left: (1) two pottery “beakers” (2) deer antler (3) antler pick (4) stone

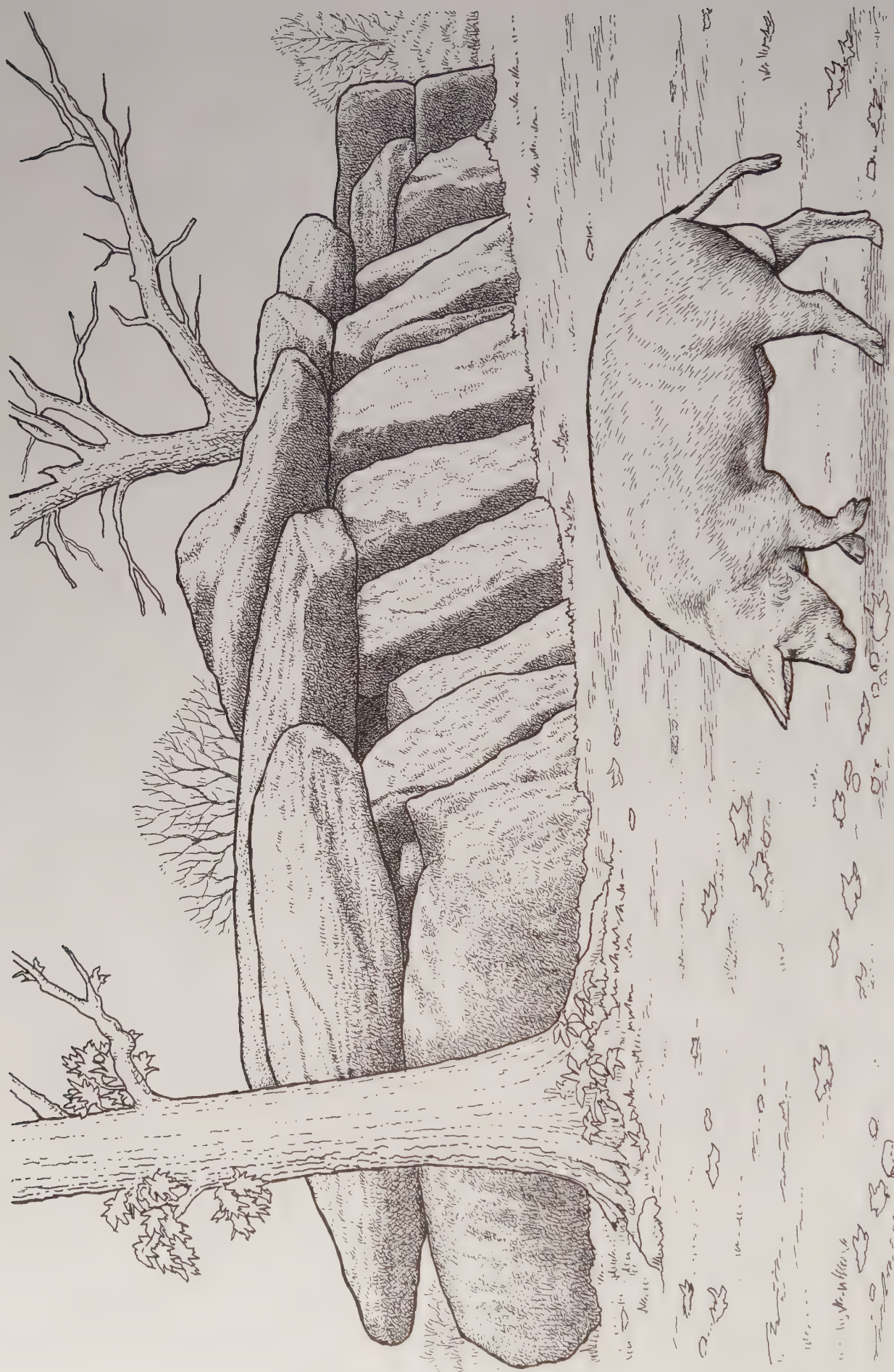
axe head (5) flint dagger (6) bronze dagger (7) bone needles (8) bronze bracelet (9) flint arrowheads (10) bone wrist guard.



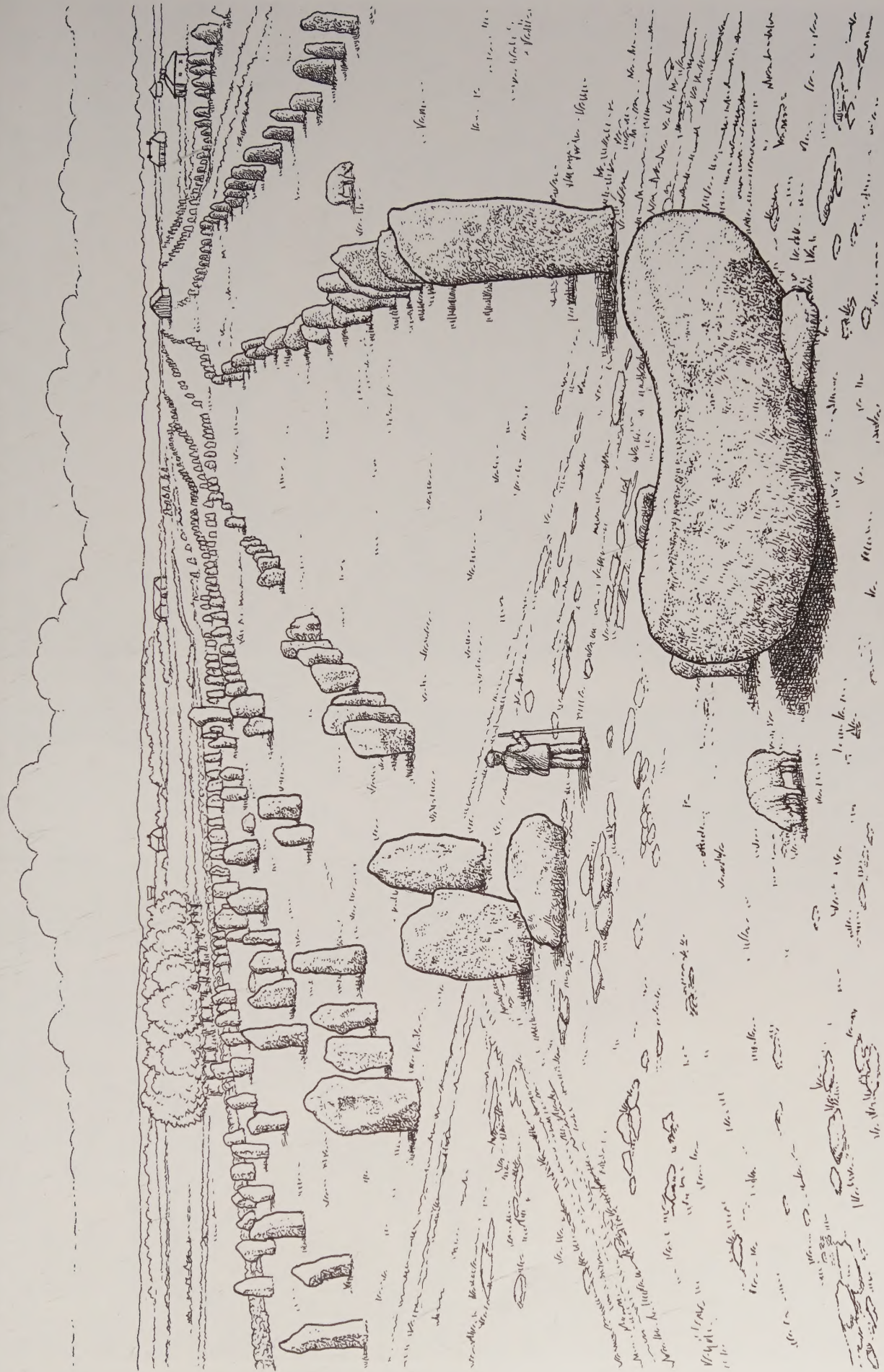
26. Megalithic sites outside Britain include this limestone temple at Tarxien, Malta, built in the third millennium B.C.



27. A Portuguese freestanding megalithic tomb. The earthen mound that covered the chamber has worn away over time. Similar tombs can be found in France, Cornwall, and Ireland.



28. A collective tomb, called a "gallery grave," in northern France. The rectangular chamber open at one end would once have been covered by an earthen mound, which has long since eroded.



29. Alignments du Menec, Carnac, France. There are three groups of these ancient alignments (stone rows), each with a ceremonial circle. Altogether, there are more than 1,000 standing stones grouped in ten parallel rows.



30. At the Newgrange passage tomb in Ireland (built c. 3200 B.C., even older than Stonehenge!), ancient builders carved mysterious geometric patterns into

the kerbstones of the tomb. Scientists are not sure exactly what these patterns mean, but they may symbolize the sun, the moon, and the human face.



West Kennet long barrow, plate 22.



Early-twentieth-century tourists visit Stonehenge, plate 19.



Builders raising a lintel (crosspiece) into position, plate 9.

THE STORY OF STONEHENGE

AND OTHER MEGALITHIC SITES COLOURING BOOK

A. G. SMITH

Believed to have been built over a period of 1,500 years, beginning around 3000 B.C., Stonehenge is one of the most impressive and awe-inspiring prehistoric monuments in the world. Located on Salisbury Plain in southern England, the structure has been studied for many years, but archaeologists are still not certain of its original purpose. Some believe Stonehenge was a site used for making astronomical observations, while others think it was dedicated to sacred rites and rituals. Whatever its purpose, the construction of Stonehenge—and other megalithic (giant stone) structures—required a highly developed understanding of astronomy, mathematics, and building techniques.

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FRONT COVER: The Druids did not build Stonehenge, but may have used it as a temple, plate 16.

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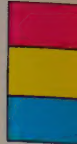
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